

want to learn English—I cannot stress that enough. Studies indicate that current immigrants are learning English faster than they did 100 years ago. In California, classes operate 24 hours a day and, in New York, some immigrants must wait up to 18 months to take classes to learn English. In response to that, Republicans in the House passed the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill which cut bilingual education, the program that teaches children information in their language and gradually makes the transition into completely English language classes. The House also cut the adult education program which provides funds for English as a Second Language classes.

The English Plus substitute maintains that services, information, and government protection should not be denied because of limited English proficiency. Among H.R. 123's provisions is the repeal of bilingual voting ballot requirement. It infringes on citizen's ability to receive information about elections and ballots in a language that they are comfortable with and violates the equal protection clause of the Constitution. In 1993, when I served as chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I authored legislation to broaden the requirements under section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, which apply to bilingual voting ballots, which Congress passed with bipartisan support. Even Presidential hopeful Bob Dole supported it. Under H.R. 123 citizens from American territories like Guam and Puerto Rico—who are born U.S. citizens—would be exempt from the bill only while they live in those jurisdictions. Once they move to the States, as many of my constituents did, they will not be able to receive information or services from the Government in Spanish.

My substitute maintains the belief that our democratic process demands the highest level of speech protection. As Members of Congress, it is essential that we be able to communicate, whether in writing or orally, with constituents, colleagues, and other government officials. It is not uncommon to receive requests for information in other languages. H.R. 123 would literally prohibit representatives from communicating in writing through correspondence, press releases, and newsletters, unless it is in English.

While I think that both our bills aim to strengthen our country, the English Plus substitute empowers by encouraging opportunity and diversity while H.R. 123 imposes divisive and restrictive policies that infringe on constitutional rights. My bill affirms that English is the common language of the United States and encourages citizens to learn it. I urge my colleagues to support the English Plus substitute and if it fails, vote "no" on H.R. 123, the English Language Empowerment Act.

HONORING RAUL S. VARGAS

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay special tribute to a lifelong friend and colleague, Mr. Raul S. Vargas, director of the University of Southern California Mexican American Alumni Association as we celebrate 25 years of his valuable

service to Hispanic students pursuing a higher level of education.

Born on May 21, 1939 in Lordsburg, NM, to a family of coppermine workers, Mr. Vargas lost his father at the age of 2 in a tragic underground mining accident. His mother remarried and in 1944, his family resettled in a low-income complex in Miami, AZ—the place where he and his five siblings were raised. After his early years of schooling in Miami, his family relocated to San Manuel, AZ, in 1957. While in high school, he played the trombone, served as student body vice president, and was also a star basketball player for the Miami Vandals. After graduating high school, he moved on to Arizona State University where he received a degree in business administration in 1961.

Shortly after graduating from ASU, he served a 3-year tour of duty with the U.S. Army in Berlin. He returned to Arizona State University during 1964 to complete his teaching credentials. He obtained his teaching credentials in 1966 and began a distinguished career teaching in math and Spanish at the junior high school level in Ontario, CA.

In 1970, Mr. Vargas witnessed the Vietnam antiwar demonstrations and the East Los Angeles riots which inspired him to pursue social causes at the community level. His passion for fostering better relations between civic leaders and community members led him to work at the Rio Hondo Area Action Council [RHAAC] where he handled community action programs. However, his yearning to teach and work one-on-one with students led him back to the education sector where in 1971, he joined the faculty and staff of the University of Southern California.

It was at USC where he began working at the department of student affairs and services as director of the USC Mexican American Alumni Association. Mr. Vargas began primarily as an academic adviser providing guidance and counsel to students, who were primarily first-time college graduates of their respective families. He found these college students to be talented and hardworking who were often hampered by the financial constraints of a college education. Recognizing the impact of such constraints, he concluded that this was the source of high college dropout rates for Hispanic students.

Realizing the issue was not being addressed, Mr. Vargas decided to do something about the situation. In 1974, he set up a series of meetings with USC alumni, faculty, business and civic leaders, and students which established the foundation of the USC Mexican American Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. Today, the USC-MAAA Scholarship Fund exceeds \$5.0 million dollars and has assisted over 3,500 students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Because of his determination and hard work, Mr. Vargas did much more than fulfill his desire to help young students pursuing higher education—he committed his life to it and has changed peoples lives forever.

It was at Arizona State University where I met and shared a room with Mr. Vargas. Gradually, we developed a friendship that has grown and strengthened throughout the years on both a professional and personal level. As a former teacher myself, I commend Mr. Raul Vargas for having the vision to change individual lives, the courage to make his dreams a reality, and the commitment to follow through

with this plan for the past 25 years. I commend Raul Vargas for his hard work, determination, and invaluable contribution to our Nation's youth.

THE ECONOMY IS STRONG AND GROWING

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, this morning we were going to hold a hearing of the Joint Economic Committee to hear the July jobs report. It was canceled. And that's a shame—because the President has an economic record any President could be proud of.

After 3½ years of President Clinton, the economy continues to grow stronger and stronger. We've created more than 10 million new jobs—a faster rate of job growth than under any Republican administration since the 1920's. In our global economy, job creating exports have increased by one-third—up \$162 billion. And today's job report, issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that we added 193,000 more jobs in July.

We have the highest rate of new business incorporations since World War II, with the Commerce Department reporting that our Nation's economy grew at an extremely healthy 4.2-percent annual rate from April through June, and with the lowest combined rates of unemployment, inflation, and mortgage rates since the 1960's.

Best of all for both working Americans and our fixed-income retirees under President Clinton we've sustained this growth while keeping inflation stable and low.

Mortgage rates are the lowest they've been in 30 years. The result: Millions of Americans have been able to purchase their first home, giving us the highest homeownership rate in 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, the current issue of Money Magazine reports: "The majority of Americans are better off on most pocketbook issues after 3½ years under [President] Clinton, who's presided over the kind of economic progress any Republican would be proud to post."

Barron's reports "In short, Clinton's economic record is remarkable. Clinton also rightfully boasted that, 'our economy is the healthiest that it has been in 30 years.'"

This record is no mere happenstance. It is the result of tough decisions. Under President Clinton, the deficit has been cut to \$117 billion this year—the lowest deficit as a percentage of GDP of any major economy—and less than half of what it was when he took office.

In fact, were it not for the interest on the debt accumulated during the Reagan and Bush years, we would be running a surplus. Alan Greenspan said earlier this year that the deficit reduction in President Clinton's 1993 Economic Plan was "an unquestioned factor in contributing to the improvement in economic activity that occurred thereafter."

On that other side, some are still talking about hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts for the wealthiest. President Clinton has proven that responsible deficit reduction that maintains our investments in research and development, in our cities, our kids, our schools, and infrastructure can work.